

Book Review

I AM calm - How to leave your worries behind

Robins, Maria. (2018). Auckland: Altreya Publishing.

It's always so much easier to write a review for a book that hits the mark for my 9-year-old worrier! My daughter and I both get excited at the chance to find new ways of hearing and learning all the wonderful things we need to know, and do, when we're worrying. The New Zealand author Maria Robins, had us feeling calm just from reading the title!

While I read, my daughter was engrossed in the images. They do a lovely job of depicting the feelings associated with worries, and they're also super cute!

It's like Robins has made everything easy for us – the gentle rhythm of the story, the simple imagery, minimal wording and wonderful advice that is pitched well for kids.

The book has given my daughter a new mantra, which is working a treat: "I am calm... I am ok... I'm not getting sucked down with these thoughts today." Saying this mantra then prompts her to begin tummy breathing which helps her to relax further. There's clearly much more to this book than I've focussed on so far. In the great scheme of the worried world, this book normalises and validates these feelings for children (and for us as their parents!). Knowing we're 'not the only ones' no matter how old we are is eminently reassuring. The strategies Robins provides are tried and tested – while we know them, it's great to have them reinforced and add them (in the form she presents them) to our calm kete.

Thank you Maria Robins – I AM Calm is a gift.

Reviewed by Anna Mowat, who works predominantly as part of the All Right? Wellbeing campaign in Ōtautahi, where she is based. She also delivers Incredible Years parenting courses for the Ministry of Education and is currently working on a Cure Kids research project to create support for parents whose children have emotional regulation issues.

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